

Remarks

The Applicants acknowledge the objection to Claims 4 and 5 as being in improper multiple-dependent form. Claims 4 and 5 have accordingly been amended to depend from Claim 1. New Claim 7 has been added which is the same as Claim 4 except that it depends from Claim 2.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the optical density changing layer comprises a composition containing a metal oxide or a composition containing a heat-decomposable compound and a light-to-heat converting substance, wherein the composition undergoes evaporation or discoloration and the optical density changing layer yields an optical density of 2.0 or higher before irradiating a laser radiation thereto and 0.5 or lower after laser is irradiate thereto. Support for the amendments to Claim 1 may be found at page 14, at lines 12 – 16, page 13, line 24, Claim 3 as originally filed and elsewhere.

Claim 6 has been amended to recite that the optical density changing layer has the same composition as set forth above with respect to Claim 1. Also, new Claims 8 and 9 have been added. They are the same as Claim 6 except that they depend from Claims 2 and 4, respectively.

Turning now to the merits, the Applicants acknowledge the rejection of Claims 1 - 3 and 6 under §102 as being anticipated by Barzynski. The Applicants note with appreciation the Examiner's detailed comments concerning locations of disclosure in Barzynski corresponding to selected aspects of the subject matter of Claim 1 prior to amendment. The Applicants also note with appreciation the Examiner's helpful conclusory comments at the bottom of page 3 of the Official Action discussing the taught photosensitive relief forming layer constituting the claimed photosensitive layer, the taught intermediate layer constituting the claimed film layer and the taught mask forming layer constituting the claimed optical density changing layer.

In particular, the Official Action states that the mask-forming layer (ML) in Barzynski meets the limitations of the claimed optical density changing layer. However, the ML contains a thermochromic system which undergoes an irreversible change in its absorption spectrum in the wave length range from 300 to 420 nm by irradiating with an IR laser. Barzynski specifically discloses in Column 4, lines 30 – 59 that in the thermochromic system, a compound in the ML changes to another compound by action o heat so that the color of the ML changes to another color and then the optical absorption changes as well.

This is in sharp contrast to the compound in the optical density changing layer of the invention which evaporates or is discolored by action of heat so that the color of the optical density changing layer vanishes or fades out. The optical density changing layer contains a metal oxide or a composition containing heat-decomposable compound and a light-to-heat converting substance. However, Barzynski does not disclose, teach or suggest such compounds. Therefore, the function of the optical density changing layer of the invention is clearly distinguished over the thermochromic system of Barzynski. Careful scrutiny of the entire Barzynski disclosure reveals that there is simply no disclosure, discussion or even appreciation for the Applicants' optical density changing layer. The Applicants therefore respectfully submit that Barzynski cannot support a rejection under §102 and respectfully request that it be withdrawn.

In light of the foregoing, we respectfully submit that the entire Application is now in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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